



WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

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WPSA PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011

A year in review

One of the first wildlife conservation projects to be announced by Suzanne Medway following her re-election as President of the Society was a new scholarship for students to study at the University of Technology Sydney. A special Gala Dinner was held in June to officially launch the new **Wildlife Science Ecology Research Scholarship** to enable bright young student scientists to study and research wildlife conservation at the University of Technology Sydney to prevent any further wildlife extinctions. The NSW Governor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, officially launched the new scholarship at the Gala Dinner on 6th June 2011.

We identified that the future of the Society lies with a new generation of young Australians who have a passion for wildlife conservation. Our research indicated that young people who study wildlife conservation at university develop a keen and abiding interest in the subject which can last a lifetime. The funds raised from the Gala Dinner are now invested in the WPSA Public Fund and are being added to progressively by ongoing donations to this Fund. You too can make a donation to the Wildlife Science Ecology Research Scholarship at any time. Donations are fully tax deductible under our registration as a DGR status Item 1 on the table in section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.



NSW Governor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO and Suzanne Medway

Wildlife conservation projects

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia has developed a diverse range of conservation projects and responsibilities in our mission to preserve Australia's unique wildlife, and this is evident in the breadth of our achievements over the last year. We deal with and support a broad spectrum of environmental issues, supporting and/or delivering various wildlife conservation projects and operating in a number of different, and sometimes difficult and isolated, locations across Australia. Some of our wildlife conservation projects focus on preserving a single species, while others deal with national problems on a continental or global scale – such as feral animals or climate change. Our volunteers work in locations all around Australia, from remote areas in the central desert to the capital cities – and all showing a tremendous dedication and commitment to preserving and protecting Australia's fauna and flora for the next generation of young Australians.



Female numbat with nesting material

102nd Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was well attended by members and a delicious morning tea was served at the conclusion of the proceedings.

President receives prestigious award

Suzanne Medway, President of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia, won the 2010 Environmental Volunteer Award for her contribution to preserving Australia's wildlife in the 2010 NRMA Helping People Awards. Every year across NSW and ACT, hardworking volunteers lend their helping hands to assist charities in their community. The NRMA Helping People Awards recognise the tireless contribution these people make.



Suzanne Medway receiving her award from NRMA President Wendy Machin, accompanied by Patrick Medway

Serventy Conservation Medal for 2010

This special award was inaugurated in 1999 to commemorate the wonderful conservation work by the members of the Serventy family: Dr Vin Serventy, his brother Dr Dominic Serventy and his sister Lucy. Each member of the family has given a lifetime of commitment to the conservation and preservation of Australian wildlife.

The Serventy Conservation Medal for 2010 was awarded to **Helen George** of Kangaroo Valley. Few people have devoted over 45 years of their lives to conservation. However, that is the achievement of the winner of our Serventy Medal for 2010, Helen George. Helen was one of the people who contributed to the forming of the Wildlife Information and Rescue Service (WIRES) and since that time she has been active in educating wildlife carers how to be responsible for the animals which come into their care. Helen is reputed to be the first person to successfully raise an orphaned grey-headed flying fox to maturity. This occurred in 1978 and the flying fox was less than 24 hours old when Helen received him. Much of his life was spent as an education animal, living for almost 23 years. Helen developed considerable expertise in this area and, in 1987, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her services to conservation, principally for her work on the plight of the grey-headed flying fox. She was one of the key advocates for getting the NSW Government to place them on the protected list. She is a scientific member of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW. Helen shares her knowledge freely and, although she has no formal academic qualifications, is often called on to talk to a variety of organisations, students and tertiary institutions. With such a length of experience, her knowledge is naturally not confined to flying foxes. She is a keen observer and recorder of data and rigorously pursues scientific principles. She is hoping to soon publish a book on the care of macropods which is eagerly awaited both by carers and veterinary scientists and students. It is a pleasure to have Helen's name added to the list of Serventy Medal winners.



Helen George holding the Serventy Conservation Medal

Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2010

The Community Wildlife Conservation Award is made each year to recognise organisations which make a significant contribution to the preservation of Australian wildlife.

The Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2010 was awarded to the **Wombat Awareness Organisation of South Australia**. The southern hairy nose wombat is the emblem of South Australia, yet landholders easily obtain permits to cull them. Often this is done in inhumane ways, while the species is in decline. The Wombat Awareness Organisation (WAO), led by Brigitte Stevens, has for many years been fighting to educate the community of South Australia that current practices risk the eventual extinction of the species. WAO has spent many hours of its members' time and considerable money on rescuing injured animals as well as negotiating with pastoralists over ways to live harmoniously with wombats. WAO has also conducted considerable research into sarcoptic mange, a deadly disease which threatens to ravage populations of the animal. WAO also has been raising money to purchase Portee Station in South Australia as a refuge for wombats as well as a place for scientific study into mange and other threats to wombat existence. Moreover, Portee Station will also be a refuge for other wildlife species, including 133 species of birds. WAO is



Brigitte Stevens of the Wombat Awareness Organisation

a completely volunteer organisation. Its achievements and aspirations make it a worthy winner of WPSA's Community Wildlife Conservation Award.

Wildlife rescue calls

We continue to receive numerous and wide-ranging distress calls for help from members of the public about sick, injured and stranded wildlife. We note with some distress that the Victorian government has been asked to remove the bare-nosed or common wombat from the list of protected native species which will allow some local farmers to destroy wombats on their property. We are fortunate to have the support of the various national wildlife rescue services that do such valuable and selfless work to help rescue, save and rehabilitate our native wildlife. We are constantly reminded of the necessity of our organisation to continue to protect and preserve our native wildlife from repeated attacks.

University Student Grants

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia announced the winners of the ten annual grants of \$1,000 each to honours and/or postgraduate students conducting research that will contribute to the conservation of Australian wildlife. The winners for 2011 were:

Joanne Towsey, University of Queensland. Project: Foraging ecology and management of flying-foxes (*Pteropus alecto* and *Pteropus poliocephalus*) in urbanised south-east Queensland

Kylie Soanes, University of Melbourne. Project: Evaluating the effectiveness of road mitigation measures for wildlife: how much monitoring is enough?

Paul Duckett, Macquarie University. Project: Combining genetics and ecological niche modeling to assess connectivity between present and future distributions of an Australian gecko (*Gehyra variegata*)

Tamara Inkster, James Cook University. Project: Community structure, altitudinal gradients, and climatic responses of microbats in the wet tropics

Bronwyn Fancourt, University of Tasmania. Project: Drought, disease or destiny? Identifying causes of decline of the eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*)

Helen Smith, University of Sydney. Project: Wildlife Responses to Black Rat Control in Sydney Harbour National Park

Maggie Haines, University of Melbourne. Project: Evolutionary ecology of an endangered alpine lizard threatened by climate change

Maggie Triska, University of Western Australia. Project: Determining Native Fauna Occupancy in unmined Jarrah Forest in South-western Australia

Mark Wallace, University of Western Australia. Project: Rare plants in the Western Australia biodiversity hotspot

Paul Chachelle, University of Western Australia. Project: The effect of fauna underpasses on the ecology and movement patterns of western grey kangaroos (*Macropus fuliginosus*) in a landscape fragmented by anthropomorphic development

2011 Conservation Group Grants

The Council of the Wildlife Preservation Society carefully considers all requests for grants from other wildlife conservation groups and places a special emphasis on native wildlife research, conservation and the preservation of wildlife habitat. The Society makes regular contact with wildlife caring groups across Australia to find out how they are faring, what their main projects are and how we can be of assistance to them in preserving native wildlife. We lobby organisations and government bodies on their behalf and make donations to assist them in their special wildlife conservation projects.

During the year major donations were made to:

Wombat Awareness Organisation in South

Australia – funds were donated to this non-profit organisation to assist in their mission of large-scale rescue and rehabilitation of the southern hairy-nosed wombat (*Lasiorhinus latifrons*). This includes wombat protection and conservation, protection of fragmented populations, developing new co-existence plans for landowners, lobbying for tougher regulations on culling and undertaking research into public opinion, population status, human impact and a Murraylands Mange Management Program. Their aim is to revolutionise the perception of wombats by promoting welfare and conservation of the species.

Fourth Crossing Wildlife – we sponsored Fourth Crossing Wildlife representative's attendance at the Wombat Conference in Albury. We felt it important that WPSA be represented for their dedication to the welfare, rescue and rehabilitation of native wildlife. The conference shared the latest information about the rescue, rehabilitation and release of wombats. There were approximately 30 presenters from across Australia, including speakers from wildlife care organisations, government, the veterinary profession, research institutions and the RSPCA.

Australian Rescue and Rehabilitation Of Wildlife

Assoc Inc – A.R.R.O.W. rescues and rehabilitates sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. We donated funds to give assistance for caring for the wildlife so seriously affected by the Queensland floods and its aftermath. It has not been possible to even hazard a guess at the loss of life in our wildlife species, or to work out how long it will be before the tree and plant food that fed birds, koalas and other wildlife are restored in this environment.

Foster of Australia's Unique Native Animals

Association – F.A.U.N.A. is a dedicated group of people who care for sick, injured and orphaned native Australian animals. We donated funds to help in the care of the native animals devastated by the Queensland floods.

National Parks Association – The Travelling Stock

Routes and Reserves (TSR) network in NSW is an extensive network of public land, established for droving sheep and cattle across the countryside. Unlike surrounding agricultural land, TSRs weren't cleared, so they have a unique range of environmental, cultural, heritage, social and economic values. We donated funds for this valuable project.

Australian Wildlife magazine

Our coloured magazine is the 'flagship' of the Society and has proved to be extremely popular amongst all of our members and their families.



Summer Cover



Autumn Cover



Winter Cover



Spring Cover

Our fortnightly Email Wildlife Newsletter has proven to be very popular with our members and we encourage them to forward it to their family, friends and associates to help spread the wildlife conservation word.

Conferences and wildlife research seminars

Councillors attended and contributed to a number of important wildlife conferences and meetings throughout the year. We actively initiated and sponsored many of these conferences and participated in others, including:

- RSPCA Scientific Day in Canberra ACT
- National Wombat Conference in Albury NSW
- 56th Scientific Meeting and Rock-wallaby Symposium by the Australian Mammal Society in Canberra ACT
- Australian Wildlife Management Society's Conference in Bathurst, NSW
- International Botanic Gardens Congress in Melbourne VIC
- Cane Toad/Frog Watch Seminar in Darwin NT
- Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel Seminar in Dubbo NSW.
- Nature Conservation Council AGM and Seminar at the University of Sydney.
- Tasmanian Conservation Trust Seminar in Hobart Tasmania
- Geko Society AGM on the Gold Coast, Queensland.

Members of the Board also contributed to the running of the Skippy Film Festival in Sydney to help conserve Waratah Park as a wildlife park and refuge for native animals.

The President and CEO also had the opportunity to travel privately to Tasmania, Darwin, the Gold Coast and Perth to meet many local members of the Society. In September they were guests of the President of the Australian Koala Foundation at the 25th anniversary reception held in Government House Brisbane and hosted by the Governor of Queensland.

WPSA is an active member of the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales. Our Society's CEO is a representative on the NSW State Pest Animal Control Council and an appointed member of the NSW Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel. He provides expert advice and assistance on wildlife conservation matters and keeps the Society abreast of environmental and conservation developments by government officials.

Members of the Society also participated in the annual Clean Up Australia Day in March and Tree Planting Day in July with some 250 native trees being planted out around the Brighton Ponds system in Rockdale Sydney.

The Society's President Suzanne was invited to attend and speak at the official celebrations to mark the 40th Anniversary of the saving of Kelly's Bush in Hunter's Hill. A memorial plaque was later installed in the Kelly's Bush parkland to commemorate this important anniversary. This function was arranged by the Hunter's Hill Council to mark the Council's 150 year celebrations.

Financial Report summary

The Society's Directors and Finance Committee continues to exercise tight and effective control over our finances and reviewed and adjusted the investment portfolio during the year. The investment funds of the Society continue to be adversely affected by the global financial crisis with the return on our investments below average. The Finance Committee reviewed the situation and made a recommendation that the Society's investments be pooled to create a single investment portfolio to maximize the income for the future wildlife conservation work.

Donations, bequests and gifts

During the year we continued with our bequest program to encourage donors to support our work through advertising in the Solicitors' Pro-Bono publication and website and general publicity. We are very grateful to all our members for considering using the bequest program to help the Society with its long-term planning. Contact the National Office for more details.

A special thank you to all our members

May I wish every member of the Society a healthy and happy 2012 and thank them most sincerely for their tremendous support and continued dedication and commitment in helping the Society to preserve and protect our native wildlife for future generations of young Australians.

Suzanne Medway JP
PRESIDENT
31 December 2011